

# JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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## CONSULTATION ON THE CHURCH IN MODERN SOCIETY

The consultation was held October 4-6 at the Christian Academy in Tokyo under the sponsorship of the NCC. About 40 people attended including pastors, foreign delegates and some missionaries.

The program consisted of meditations, talks discussions and answer periods. On the first day Rev. Mr. Kiyoshi Hirai, Executive Secretary of the NCC was chairman of the sessions and conducted the opening worship. Dr. Takeshi Muto gave the sermon and included some reflections on his recent trip to Europe for the WCC meeting. Dr. Yoshimitsu Endo, Professor of Christian Ethics at the Anglican-Episcopal Seminary spoke on "The Theology of the Laity." Then Professor Robert Wood of Doshisha U. talked on the subject, "The Problem of Ethics in Modern Society." Following this was a period of discussion with Dr. Hendrik Kraemer and the speakers on the points raised in their talks.

Dr. Endo in his talk and the question period emphasized the danger of over-emphasizing the "servant figure" fearing that Christianity will fall into mere ethics. There is a place for the sacrificial systems in the New Testament and Hebrews should be considered on the same level with Paul. He questioned Dr. Kraemer's book feeling that not adequate attention was given to the O.T.







meaning of the "people of God" and the function of the priest system or to the role of the disciples (Matt. 10:1). Also he said one of the fundamental responsibilities of the Laity is to support the clergy economically.

Dr. Kraemer was amazed to hear that the laity have a responsibility to support the clergy. They should be adequately supported, but to call it one of the main responsibilities of the laity pre-judges the question of the relationship of the clergy and laity. He went on to say the purpose of his book is to show that the whole calling of the church in whatever respect lies jointly on the whole church, and therefore jointly on the clergy and the laity.

Mr. Wood stressed that the church knows its existence is not identical with the world or with God. It is one of a triad of relationships. Christ died for the whole world. The whole world is his object not just a part. Whatever the church says about freedom cannot mean freedom from this relationship, but freedom thru these relationships. In concluding he said that the whole people of God is not a separated people but a part of the world claimed by God which responds to God. The church has failed the point of illuminating for the laity what is the meaning for laity of family, work, political forces, movements and relationships. It has so often failed to illumine for man what it means for man to be claimed by God not apart from his work but in his work... not simply as an instrument but as a place of response.

On the second day, Mr. Masao Takenaka of Doshisha University was chairman. The Bible study was given by Professor Katsumi Matsumura of Kansai Gakuin. Mr. V. G. Montes, Secretary of the Committee on Christian and Vocation of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines addressed the group. He said that in the Philippines one of the first problems is the organizational church, it is loath to change. He calls the theological emphasis 'statistical evangelism', a pre-war missionary emphasis with an undue preoccupation with numbers. After the war the church grew by leaps and bounds. In 1956 the General Assembly ordered a four year emphasis to double membership, the slogan was "every member an evangelist." From 90,000 in 1956 it increased to about 130,000 members, a little faster than the population growth. But this growth has not changed the church. It is the same kind of church, organization and interest in numbers. However, the General Assembly realized the weakness of the program and for the next four years the emphasis has been put on enriching the life and witness of the laity. There is a new entity on the study of the meaning of the church. He also feels that the term contemporary society is much more descriptive than modern society, for the church must minister not only to the urban but to the agricultural workers who have been neglected in the onrushing currents of modern society. The church in the Philippines, the organizational or empirical church is inadequate to meet the needs of the modern world. We need first "to convert our churches. He did mention their development of interest in Industrial Evangelism which they call "Industrial Life and Vocation." There is a tendency for the layman to be confused between the role of the layman in the church and the layman in the world. To understand the role of the layman better, they have been conducting institutes for ministers, which have been well-received.







Professor Yoshiaki Iizaka of the Peer's School in Tokyo spoke on the "Role of the Church in the Modern World". He is a layman whose field is economics, history and sociology. He said that there seems to be taking place today a significant change in the church situation throughout the world which he characterized as being on an inter and intra church level. A real dialogue is taking place between western churches and "younger churches" because there is now a real feeling of "partners in obedience." The dialogue inside the church is taking place between laity and clergy. Then there is a third level of dialogue which is between the church and the world. He stressed that the church has a mission to go after "that which is lost" in modern society. These areas were mentioned as being: religions mingled with magic and superstition; secularism; political aspects of society; economic aspects where we find the laborer who can not find meaning in his labor and in his lostness is meaninglessness, the manager who deals with men as objects or impersonal things and the role of the capitalist or owner who becomes a merely passive agent in modern society; consumption; and lastly the social aspect where we find "mass-ification" and technique which becomes an end in itself. For the church to reach these lost she needs a new structure, she must do away with "mere religiosity" if she wants to "hear" from the lost in this industrial society. The lay movement or lay institutes were cited as places where this "religionlessness" must be found. In concluding he cited Bonhoeffer, "the church is her true self only when she exists for humanity.." In the afternoon reports were heard on Korea and Okinawa and then there were discussions on the morning talks.

On Thursday the chairman was Rev. Mr. Ichiro Saito. The meditation was given by Dr. A. Schmidt of the Academy in Japan who spoke on the "theology of dialogue" studying the relation of word and act. In the Bible word is action.

Conversation takes place between men, it is not self-seeking, not an egoistical technique. That the word became flesh means that the word expresses acts. Word without act is powerless and act without word is meaningless self-reflection. Conversation is not directed to self and one's own purposes. It is directed outward and its goal is koinonia or communion, fellowship. Today such conversation is a form of prayer. Thru it God can give new form and meaning.

Dr. Kraemer then spoke on "The Church in Modern Society". (The following excerpts are taken from question and answer sessions and his speech, selecting remarks made in reference to Japan)

"Secularization is a problem of far greater magnitude and difficulty in Asia. It has been produced by the West itself, a fruit of interior development. Whereas secularization we are throwing by the invasion of the West into the East, is not a growth out of yourself, therefore it will shake you deeper in the long run."

In regard to church unity, he said that practically, we Christians at the present time are perfect hypocrite. On this point of unity, he felt the Japanese church is treating it as a question of







taste or hobby. But he went on to urge that unity is essential to the church and its mission in the world. The visible manifestation of the oneness of the church is the basis of the unity of the world. He mentioned the early history of the "interdenominational church" in 1872 and the later developing denominational structures of the churches the missionaries represented. He feels the Kyodan has never gotten the passion of unity and that he takes it as his duty to speak about church unity.. simply in terms of being a sower. Let everyone in Japan who feels seriously about this also become a sower.

He visited two churches and felt the only Japanese things were the faces and the language. Since "our" (Western) churches are all operating on a pattern that is derived from the past, he felt the church must ask itself if it is operating in the most adequate way. He had the feeling that this westernization itself had already become a sort of precious heritage. He said a primary question is to ask oneself how can the gathering of the community (i.e. worship service) be carried out to give expression to the fundamental fellowship of the people? The closing service was conducted by Rev. Mr. Rokuro Yamaguchi of the NCC.

#### AMAGI SANJO CONFERENCE WITH DR. KRAEMER

About 100 delegates including the foreign delegates, 11 missionaries and 8 laymen attended the conference held October 11-14. It was sponsored by the Research Institute on the Mission of the Church of the United Church.

Dr. Hendrik Kraemer gave two main addresses entitled "The Christian Message in a non-Christian World" and "The Laity." Other addresses were given by: Rev. K. Kato, director of the Institute, Professor Kazo Kitamori of Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, Rev. Mr. Suzuki, Professor M. Doi of Doshisha and Professor Y. Muroguchi of Kobe JoGakuin, Professor T. Sato, Professor S. Yamaya, Rev. Mr. S. Miyamoto, Rev. Mr. G. Okada and Rev. Mr. Y. Saeki. The Bible Lessons were led by Dr. Kuwada, Rev. Mr. Oyama and Dr. Kraemer. Discussions, question periods and plenary sessions were also part of the program.

This the first time that a conference has been held on the relation to the non-Christian world and the subject of the non-Christian world in relation to mission. Although Dr. Kraemer's thought is new to many, translations of his books "Communion of the Christian Faith", "Theology of the Laity"(digest) and "Religion and the Christian Faith"(digest) have been made to acquaint the Christians here with his point of view.

To facilitate exchange of thought addresses were published in both Japanese and English and simultaneous translations were given. Professor Kazo Kitamori spoke on "Japanese Culture and Christianity". In it he traced the development of the basic characteristic of the Japanese spirit which is "immediacy" or the direct relation to the natural universe. He said that the concept of negativity was introduced by Buddhism but impact of Buddhism was channeled into that of a vehicle to create artistic beauty. It found its expression in temple building and image carving. The Buddhist faith became separated from the awareness of the tragic element in the human situation. But this concern or perception of the tragic element was the starting point of Prince Shotoku's thought, it expressed itself







later again in Saigyō and Bashō and still later in the tragedies in the Tokugawa era. In closing he mentioned the questions the positive element poses to Christianity. They are: the Buddhist view of the absolute, the contrast between the Yahweh Sabaoth and the Buddha of sorrowful desire and the relationship between truth and opportunity. (See Japan Christian Quarterly July, October 1960 for two lectures on this subject)

Professor Doi addressed the group on "Christianity and Religions in Japan". He characterized the basic trait of the Japanese mentality as being the absence of the sense of ultimacy. He traced the reasons for the lack of a sense of sin, the weak sense of the dignity of the individual and the syncretistic nature of Japanese religions back to the "absence of a sense of ultimacy". He noted that in 1959 against a total population of 92 million, adherents reported by religious organizations was 130 million. Since the total number estimated as having no beliefs amounted to 25 million, roughly each Japanese believed in two religions at one time.

With the introduction of Buddhism in the 6th century the "optimistic life-affirming" ancient Japanese learned to doubt the meaning of life. Thru contact with Christianity they reached for the first time the consciousness of the ultimate in the real sense of the term.

He described the negative function of faith as the power to relativize everything which is preliminary. There is an absolute gap to that which faith testifies and everything else. But the message cannot be communicated to a Japanese without using terms and ideas understandable to them. There must be an element of continuity between the two. The positive function of faith is to choose between different terms. For example, when a Japanese Buddhist is touched by the Christian message, his existence in the Buddhist circle will be shaken. He can not be sure that he is not still understanding some Christian doctrines in Buddhist terms. Buddhism is so deeply instilled within the life-blood of the Japanese people that some Japanese Christians in critical moments invoke the name of Buddha instead of Christ. This suggests that they are Christians only on the conscious level while still remaining Buddhists in the subconscious. However after a long process such a person's understanding of Christianity will become completely purged and he will become a real Christian.

Professor Seigo Yamaya spoke about the Mukyokai or non-church movement. He said there is no laity problem in the Mukyokai for they have no church organization at all. He said the Japanese like Bible reading but the western church was not suitable for the Japanese society. Kanzo Uchimura insisted what was desired was not the church but the Bible. Many people like this easier way because in becoming church members it makes their lives inconvenient and uncomfortable. What they want is freedom and independence.

Mr. Kunio Kato traced the concept of the laity in his talk on the "Problem of the Laity". Protestant Christians have not been free from the influence of the general religious ideas that







have been in the country long before Christianity. The term 'laity' has been understood by Japanese Christians according to the dualistic view of sacred and secular, and he cited Gumpei Yamamuro's idea as an example of it. Tokutaro Takakura later grasped the reality of the church theologically, but he limited the field of service to within the church. Kagawa broadened the field by preaching that Christians in the world must serve the world. In 1939 when the Religious Bodies Law was promulgated, churches were made the property of the ministers and this influence still lingers on in the post-war life and thinking of the church. It is clear that the awakening of the church in Japan to the true status and function of the laity will require time and concerted attention.

#### KAGAWA PICTURE PRODUCED

AVACO has had printed ten thousand copies of an enlarged color photograph of the late Toyohiko Kagawa, taken not long before the death of the famous Christian evangelist. These are for world-wide distribution and all profits will go to the support of Christian work begun by Dr. Kagawa.

#### FALL WORKSHOP PROGRAM INCLUDES ASIA TRAINING

Among the schedule of fall training workshops, on October 10 and 11 at the Christian AV Centera Flannelgraph Workshop, directed by Rev. Minoru Yamada, was held for the six students of the Asia Rural Evangelism Seminar which has brought together students from Korea, Taiwan and Japan extended courses on rural life and rural evangelism.

On the 20 and 21 of October a workshop, training movie projector operators, will be held and the following month two AVACO leaders will travel to the island of Shikoku to take part in a workshop.

#### AVACO BROADCASTING CHORUS IN NEW START

After a rest of several months, following the change of format in AVACO's radio program, "Songs of the Heart" which made it into a documentary drama program, the AVACO Broadcasting Chorus has been reorganized. Its strength is being increased to thirty-two voices. In October the chorus sang six selections at a benefit concert for a church construction program. On December first the organization will join with two other choirs in a massive "Christmas Concert" sponsored by the Asahi Shimbun Newspaper and directed by AVACO. It is planned to adapt this script and music for use on Christmas Eve over television in the Tokyo area.

#### JAPANESE DELEGATES ATTEND STRASBOURG CONFERENCE

During the last two weeks of July, thirteen representatives from Japan participated in the Teaching Conference on the Life and Mission of the Church of the World Student Christian Federation in Strasbourg, France. Attending the conference were 700 students and leaders from 70 nations, including a few of the so-called "Iron Curtain" countries. The conference delegates and







leadership also represented all aspects of the life of the Church-Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, and conservative evangelical.

A report meeting on the conference was held on October 7, 1960 in the National YMCA Building under the auspices of the Life and Mission of the Church Committee of Japan. Detailed reports on the conference were made by the Rev. Rinzo Toki, of the Gokisho Church of the United Church of Christ in Nagoya and Hajime Fujimori, newly appointed Executive Secretary of the Student Department of the National YMCA. Also reporting were student representatives Tadashi Miyabe of the Student Christian Fellowship in Tokyo, Miss Reiko Suzuki of the Student YMCA and Mitsuru Takiura of the Student YMCA, and also the Rev. In Ha Lee of the Korean Church of Kawasaki, the Rev. Hajime Sekimoto of the Seiko Church of the Japanese Anglican Church in Kyoto, and the Rev. L. Newton Thurber, United Church of Christ missionary in Kyoto.

At the Strasbourg Conference, it was reported, great stress was placed upon the Lordship of Christ over both the Church and the world, and the implication of this for the Church in taking seriously its mission to be God's people in the world. Because the conference was conceived as a teaching conference, its structure included 28 lectures including those of D. T. Niles, W. A. Vissert'Hooft and Lesslie Newbigin, seminars on such subjects as "The Church and Missions" and small tutorial groups which met every night throughout the conference.

The Strasbourg Teaching Conference is the center of a six year program on the Life and Mission of the Church of the seventy national student Christian movements that are related to the World Student Christian Federation. Preceding the Strasbourg Conference there was intensive study in the various national movements and a "pilot" Asian Conference held at Rangoon in January, 1959. Plans were reported as having been laid at the Federation's General Committee Meeting held at Thessaloniki, Greece in August for religious conferences on the same theme to be carried out during the next three years including an Asian Christian Professors Conference to be held in Japan in the spring, 1963. (Rev. Mr. Newton Thurber)

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# CORRECTION

In the article appearing in the October 1 issue on the dedication of the Nagoya Christian Relief Center, Mr. Toyama gave a personal gift of \$ 13,900 and Nikko Securities Company gave \$ 27,800.00 toward the project.



